

REMARKS

Claims 1-5 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claim 1 is amended. Support for the features recited in amended claim 1 can be found, for example, in Applicant's Fig. 15.

Applicant appreciates the allowance of claims 2-5.

Claim 1 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Labrie et al. (Labrie), U.S. Patent No. 5,941,558, in view of Carter et al. (Carter), U.S. Patent No. 5,456,490. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Labrie and Carter fail to disclose or suggest a trim member with at least two door hinge portion protecting plates disposed below and separate from an air bag door portion, each door hinge portion protecting plate protruding toward a side of a tear portion rather than toward a hinge portion of the air bag door portion and having a high break force, wherein a predetermined spacing is provided between each door hinge portion protecting plate and a lower surface of the air bag door portion and a predetermined spacing is provided between each door hinge portion protecting plate, as recited in claim 1.

Labrie discloses a restraint apparatus with an air bag deployment door 16 and a reaction plate 28 (Fig. 2). The door 16 includes ribs 40 that extend integrally inward from a door inner surface 38 to a point adjacent a pivotable lower panel portion 42 of the reaction plate 28 (col. 4, lines 58-61).

Labrie fails to disclose or suggest at least two door hinge portion protecting plates, as recited in claim 1, because Labrie only discloses one reaction plate 28. Labrie's reaction plate 28 (having a first hinge line 36 and a second hinge line 37) appears to correspond to a door hinge and not the flexible tether 50. Labrie's flexible tether 50 is not a second door hinge portion protecting plate because the tether 50 contacts both the door 16 (col. 5, lines 55-57)

and the reaction plate 28 (col. 5, lines 38-41). In other words, a predetermined spacing is not provided between the tether 50 and door 16 or reaction plate 28.

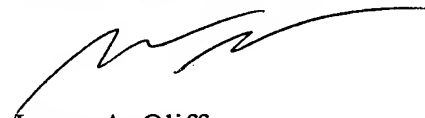
Labrie thus fails to disclose or suggest the at least two door hinge portion protecting plates, as recited in claim 1. Carter fails to overcome the deficiencies of Labrie because Carter fails to disclose door hinge portion protecting plates.

Accordingly, Labrie and Carter fail to disclose or suggest all of the features recited in claim 1. It is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-5 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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